

Message Text

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17-20

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 COME-00 FMC-04 CG-00 COA-02

DLOS-06 AID-20 FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02

LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 DRC-01 /197 W

----- 000343

R 010430Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7283

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMEMBASSY SUVA

CINCPAC

HICOMTERPACIS SAIPAN

UNCLAS WELLINGTON 2884

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

HICOMSAIPAN FOR STATUS LNO TRENT

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: ELAB, PFOR, PINT, XP

SUBJECT: PACIFIC ISLANDS SHIPPING CONFERENCE (PISC)

REF WELLINGTON 1852

BEGIN SUMMARY: PISC HELD IN WAITANGI, NZ OCT 25-27.
DELEGATES AGREED REQUEST SOUTH PACIFIC BUREAU ECONOMIC
COOPERATION (SPEC) TO INVESTIGATE POSITION OF SEAMEN
ENGAGED ON ISLAND OWNED SHIPS WITH VIEWTOWARD ESTABLISHING
PAY RATE ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH ISLAND SHIPPING LINES AND NZ SEAMENS
UNION. TONE OF CONFERENCE GENERALLY CONCILLIATORY
BUT SEAMENS UNION INSISTED THAT TRADE BETWEEN
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ISLAND AND NZ BE CARRIED ON NZ MANNED SHIPS. IF

THIS ISSUE NOT RESOLVED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH PACIFIC WILL CONTINUE TO BE STYMIED BY INADEQUATE AND EXPENSIVE TRANSPORT. END SUMMARY.

1. PISC CALLED BY PM KIRK IN EFFORT GET LABOR, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AROUND SAME TABLE TO WORK OUT DIFFERENCES. COOK ISLANDS, FIJI, NAURU, NIUE, TONGA, WESTERN SAMOA AND NZ REPRESENTED AT GOVERNMENT LEVEL. NZ FOL AND MAIRITIME UNIONS REPRESENTED LABOR. FOLLOWING LEAD OF PM KIRK MOST DELEGATES TOOK CONSTRUCTIVE LINE IN ATTEMPTING WORK OUT PROBLEMS. EXCEPTIONS WERE TONGAN REPRESENTATIVE T.A. TUFUI (WHO ACCUSED NZ UNIONISTS OF "BASHING OUT BLINDLY AND VIOLENTLY... KICKING ISLANDERS IN THE TEETH") AND NZ SEAMEN UNION (WHICH INSISTED THROUGHOUT CONFERENCE THAT TRADE BETWEEN ISLANDS AND NZ MUST BE CARRIED ON NZ MANNED SHIPS.) FINAL COMMUNIQUE MADE NO REFERENCE SEAMENS' POSITION WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO BE MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCK IN WORKING OUT RATIONAL SOLUTION TO ENTIRE PROBLEM OF SHIPPING.

2. MAJOR AGREEMENT REACHED AT CONFERENCE WAS TO REQUEST SPEC TO INVESTIGATE CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT OF ISLANDER SEAMEN. SPEC AUTHORIZED CONSULT WITH INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT FEDERATION AND ILO WITH VIEW TOWARD ESTABLISHING ACCEPTABLE ISLAND PAY SCALE. ALTHOUGH SUCH A SCALE WOULD PROBABLY OVERCOME NZ SEAMENS'S OBJECTIONS ABOUT PAY RATES, FINDING A LEVEL ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH ISLAND GOVERNMENTS AND SEAMENS UNION NOT LIKELY TO BE EASY TASK.

3. GNZ REITERATED ITS INTENTIONS CONTINUE AND INCREASE ECONOMIC AID TO ISLANDS IN AREA OF TRANSPORT. DEVELOPMENT OF PORT AND WHARF FACILITIES STRESSED AS WERE GNZ EFFORTS IN TRAINING MARITIME PERSONNEL. NO FIGURES GIVEN AS TO DOLLAR AMOUNT OF AID ISLANDS MIGHT EXPECT TO RECEIVE.

4. COMMENT: PISC GAVE GNZ OPPORTUNITY RESTATE
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ITS DESIRE ASSIST SOUTH PACIFIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TO SHOW, AT GOVERNMENT LEVEL, THAT IT IS TRYING TO RESOLVE ONE OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS. FORWARD MOVEMENT ON SHIPPING WOULD BE MAJOR STEP IN ALLOWING INCREASED EXPORTS OF ISLAND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS. HOWEVER, SPEC REPORT ON PAY SCALES AND EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS LIKELY TO TAKE SEVERAL MONTHS TO PREPARE AND AN EVEN LONGER PERIOD MAY BE

REQUIRED TO OBTAIN ACCEPTANCE FROM INTERESTED
PARTIES. ONCE AGREEMENT REACHED GNZ WILL HAVE TO
BEGIN WORK IN EARNEST TO CONVINCE SEAMENS UNION
THAT NEW ZEALANDERS SHOULD NOT HAVE MONOPOLY ON
ISLAND TRADE. THIS TASK WILL FALL MAINLY TO
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY LABOR E.E. ISBEY.
ISBEY WAS MOST IMPRESSIVE IN CHAIRING PISC AND,
AS A FORMER DOCK WORKERS OFFICIAL, HAS CLOSE TIES
WITH TRADE UNIONISTS. THE ODDS THAT HE CAN
CONVINCE SEAMEN OF THE ERROR OF THEIR WAYS
ARE RATHER LONG AT THE MOMENT BUT SHOULD IMPROVE
IF AND WHEN AGREEMENT IS REACHED ON THE SPEC
REPORT. IF HE SUCCEEDS THE CHANCES FOR INCREASED
SOUTH PACIFIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WILL BE GREATLY
INCREASED.
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